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Programme of work

Trade subprogramme biennial evaluation report for 2016-2017

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) trade subprogramme ("the subprogramme") biennial evaluation report for 2016–2017. The report measures the subprogramme's performance against the expected accomplishments (EA) and indicators of achievement (IA) as established under the subprogramme's programme of work (ECE/CTCS/2015/7).

The evaluation covers the sub-programme's main areas of work, which are supported by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6), the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7); the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business (UN/CEFACT), and the secretariat to support Member States in their efforts to implement of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools on trade facilitation, regulatory cooperation and agricultural quality standards.

The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (CTCS) is invited to endorse the segments related to the Steering Committee and its subsidiary bodies, WP.6 and WP.7. The evaluation of UN/CEFACT is provided for information only.

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Introduction

1. Consistent with the Trade subprogramme's programme of work, the evaluation report applies a results-based management (RBM) approach which establishes logical relationship between the hierarchical results (outputs – outcomes – impact) or 'results chain', the resources (human and financial) or 'inputs' and the external factors (strategic, governance, operational, financial) that have a direct bearing on the achievement of the objective.

2. The objective of the subprogramme was to strengthen trade facilitation and trade-related economic cooperation in the ECE region, and external factors were: (a) there is political will and cooperation among Governments and international organizations; (b) there is demand from public and private sectors for ECE standards and recommendations; (c) member States provide the necessary information; (d) there is active participation by experts in ECE technical meetings; and (e) donors provide extra-budgetary funding.

3. The responsibility for the subprogramme was vested in the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division.

4. The document maps the expected accomplishments with the corresponding indicators and associated performance measures by area of work, and provides reflections on lessons learned.

I. Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardisation Policies

Expected accomplishment

5. Increased consensus on best practices and strengthened implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for regulatory cooperation.

Indicators of achievement

6. Number of new and/or revised recommendations and tools for regulatory cooperation adopted by the ECE:

Performance measures:

- 2012-2013: 2 new and/or revised recommendations and tools
- Estimate 2014-2015: 1 new and/or revised recommendations and tools
- Target 2016-2017: 2 new and/or revised recommendations and tools
- Achieved: 4 new and/or revised recommendations and tools

Statement of accomplishments

7. WP.6 adopted Recommendation T on "Standards and Regulations for Sustainable Development", which is geared to enhance the contribution of voluntary standards and regulatory frameworks in achieving the Agenda 2030. In addition, the member States adopted Recommendation S on "Applying predictive risk management tools for targeted market surveillance" as well as the updated version of Recommendations F "Creation and Promotion of International Agreements on Conformity Assessment" and G "Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Results". Recommendations F and G support governments' efforts to establish, promote and implement conformity assessment procedures, while Recommendation S fosters a culture of prevention of accidents on the basis of a structured

assessment of risks. These Recommendations help Governments avoid establishing procedures that are not justified on grounds of safety and public health.

Lessons learned

8. ECE member States highlighted the need to regularly review existing Recommendations to ensure their continued relevance. This renders increased outreach and strong cooperation with the standards, conformity assessment, research and academic community crucial, so as to access and tap into the required expertise knowledge. ECE will follow this approach in the next biennium.

II. Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Expected accomplishment

9. Increased consensus on best practices and strengthened implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for agricultural quality standards.

Indicators of achievement

(a) Number of new and/or revised recommendations and standards on agricultural produce adopted by the ECE:

Performance measures:

- 2012-2013: 25 new and/or revised recommendations and standards
- Estimate 2014-2015: 25 new and/or revised recommendations and standards
- Target 2016-2017: 25 new and/or revised recommendations and standards
- Achieved: 39 new and/or revised recommendations and standards

(b) Number of implementations of existing, new or revised ECE agricultural quality standards by member States:

Performance measures:

- 2012-2013: 970 implementations
- Estimate 2014-2015: 1,000 implementations
- Target 2016-2017: 1,000 implementations
- Achieved: 1,500 implementations

(c) Number of opened PDF files with ECE recommendations and standards on agricultural produce, as a proxy for their use:

Performance measures:

- 2012-2013: Not available
- Estimate 2014-2015: Not available
- Target 2016-2017: 45,000 files
- Achieved: 75, 379 files

Statement of accomplishments

10. The number of adopted and revised agricultural quality standards reached 39, thus exceeding the biennial target. The 4 Specialized Sections adopted new and revised standards to cope with increased demand for updates and trade relevant practices. The

newly adopted standards include: veal and lamb retail meat cuts, edible co-products, eggs-in-shell, egg products, duck meat, walnuts, walnut kernels, inshell almonds, pistachios, almond kernels, walnut kernel brochure, dried apricots, dried figs, dried grapes, dried coconut pieces, dried bananas, seed potatoes, aubergines, avocadoes, leeks, garlic, chicory, sweet chestnuts, table grapes, truffles, sweet peppers, citrus fruit, rhubarb, cherries, fennel, plums, fresh figs, kiwi fruit, headed cabbages, apples, pears, tomatoes, explanatory posters on dried apricot.

11. Implementations by Member States was 1500, owing to the EU's harmonization efforts harmonization effort by all EU member states to align their standards with those of ECE as well the new adoptions of nuts and dried fruit, meat and seed potato standards by e.g. China, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Vietnam. Brazil and Namibia export fresh figs using ECE standards. Australia's beef and lamb meat cuts exported to over one hundred countries followed ECE standards.

12. The number of opened PDF files exceeded the target, attesting to the increased relevance and use of the standards as tool to foster quality food production and sale. A major share of the opened files include Fresh Fruits and Vegetables standards. The number also includes new and revised standards and explanatory brochures in Dry and Dried Products, Meat and Seed Potatoes.

13. The increased ECE capacity-building efforts paired with new guidance material and initiatives on food loss reduction, traceability, code of good practice, base line quality for domestic and export markets, eating quality, have strengthened the uptake and use of ECE recommendations for agricultural produce quality, sustainable production and consumption both within and outside the ECE region.

Lessons learned

14. The impact of standards on sustainable trade, production and consumption can be significantly increased through outreach, advisory missions, workshops and linkages with the work of other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and donor agencies. Linking standards' development to related issues (e.g. food waste reduction, food safety), and fostering closer cooperation among all parties has increased the implementation of agricultural standards worldwide. This approach will be upheld by the secretariat.

III. United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business

Expected accomplishment

15. Increased consensus on best practices and strengthened implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business.

Indicators of achievement

(a) Number of new and/or revised recommendations, norms, standards and tools for trade facilitation and electronic business adopted by the ECE:

Performance measures:

- 2012-2013: 24 new and/or revised instruments
- Estimate 2014-2015: 24 new and/or revised instruments
- Target 2016-2017: 22 new and/or revised instruments

- Achieved: 51 new and/or revised instruments

(b) Number of page views of ECE key trade facilitation and electronic business recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools, as a proxy for their use:

Performance measures:

- 2012-2013: Not available
- Estimate 2014-2015: Not available
- Target 2016-2017: 900,000 page views
- Achieved:2,607,600 page views

Statement of accomplishments

16. During 2016-2017, the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) approved 51 new and/or revised recommendations, norms, standards and tools, which is more than double the target of the biennium. The list includes, among others: Recommendation 1 on United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents - Recommendation 36 on Single Window Interoperability; Recommendation 41 on Public-Private Partnerships in Trade Facilitation; Recommendation 42 on Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanisms; UN Global Report 2017 on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation; UNECE Regional Report 2017 on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation; Briefing note on the contribution of UN CEFACT to UN Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Briefing note on the contribution of UN CEFACT to UN Sustainable Development Goal 14; Background paper: facilitating trade to feed the world; Recommendations of the 4th UNECE International Conference on Single Window of 30-31 October 2017, Geneva, Switzerland; Technical Note on Terminology for Single Window and Other Electronic Platforms; White Paper on a Reference Data Model (RDM); Green Paper on Trade Finance as a tool for Trade Facilitation; UNECE Study on Traceability for Sustainable Textile value Chains; Supply Chain Reference Data Model (SCRDM) Guideline; Executive Guide on Core Component Technical Specification (UN/CCTS & the UN/CCL); Executive Guide on UN/EDIFACT; Executive Guide on Small Scaled Lodging House Information Process; White Paper on Paperless Trade; 4 UN/EDIFACT Directories (Versions D.16A, D.16B, D.17A and D.17B); 4 UN/LOCODE Directories (Versions 2016-1, 2016-2, 2017-1 and 2017-2); 4 UN/CEFACT Core Component Libraries (Versions D.16A, D.16B, D.17A and D.17B); 4 UN/CEFACT XML Schema Libraries (Versions D.16A, D.16B, D.17A and D.17B); 2 Codes for Units of Measure Used in International Trade (Recommendation 20, Revision 11 and 12 of the code list); Trade and Transport Status Codes (Recommendation 24, revision 24 of the code list); Verified Gross Mass (VERMAS) Business Requirement Specifications; Cross-Industry Remittance Advice Business Requirement Specifications; Cross-Industry Remittance Advice Requirements Specification Mapping; Transboundary Movements of Waste Business Requirement Specifications; Transboundary Movements of Waste Requirements Specification Mapping; Supply Chain Data Reference Model Business Requirement Specifications; Supply Chain Data Reference Model Requirements Specification Mapping; Cross-Industry Invoicing Business Requirement Specifications; Cross-Industry Invoicing Requirements Specification Mapping; Accounting Journal Book Business Requirement Specifications; Accounting Journal Book Requirements Specification Mapping ; Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (FLUX) Business Requirement Specifications P1000-v1.0; and, Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (FLUX) Business Requirement Specifications P1000-v1.1.

17. In addition, ECE helped member States implement the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation. This involved assisting them in adopting key

recommendations on partnership, measuring efficiency, single window and aligned documents as well as e-business standards such as data libraries, code lists and electronic messages. Albania and Kyrgyzstan received ECE assistance to implement trade facilitation measures. ECE recommendations also support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially on sustainable fishery (SDG14), single window (SDG 8 and SDG17) and electronic messaging standards notably on e-Invoicing (SDG17). ECE promoted these tools through active cooperation with development partners.

18. Over 2.5 million page views of ECE instruments for trade facilitation and electronic business were registered in 2016-2017, demonstrating the pertinence of these tools. About two-thirds of the page views were from the UN Trade and Transport Location Code (UN/LOCODE). The rest included UN/CEFACT pages on 41 recommendations and over 400 standards, technical specifications and tools. Some of the key ones include EDIFACT, Core Component Data Type Catalogue, Core Component Technical Specification and more. Apart from this, the online knowledge management tool, the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG) attracted about 674,000 unique visitors and 3.7 million page views throughout the biennium.

Lessons learned

19. The development and revision of standards and recommendations on trade facilitation and electronic business was strategically selected following the entry of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation into force early 2017. This enabled ECE to respond, within limited resources, to the increasing demand of tools supporting the implementation of this agreement. ECE member States expressed interest in developing a Framework Agreement on e-Trade to advance paperless trade. This will be addressed in the next biennium.

IV. Secretariat to the Steering Committee

Expected accomplishment

20. Enhanced national capacity of member States for the implementation of ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools.

Indicators of achievement

21. Number of new national actions to implement ECE recommendations, norms, standards, guidelines and tools:

Performance measures:

- 2012-2013: Not available
- Estimate 2014-2015: Not available
- Target 2016-2017: 4 national actions
- Achieved: 6 national actions

Statement of accomplishments

22. The 6 national actions were based on the results of the national studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, carried out by the secretariat in Albania, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova. The national actions drew on the result-oriented recommendations emerging from the studies, which were developed in consultation with public and private sector stakeholders. The recommendations were geared towards helping the countries implement ECE as well as international recommendations,

norms, standards, guidelines and tools, as part of their broader reform efforts to address capacity shortfalls in 4 areas: trade facilitation, standardization, regulatory cooperation and quality assurance. Below is an overview of the national actions.

(a) The Albanian government integrated the recommendations to the National Plan for European Integration for the period 2014-2016; the Inter-sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development in Albania for the period 2014-2020; and the Business and Investment Development Strategy for the period 2014-2020. This has been stated in the foreword to the study that was consigned by the ECE executive secretary and the Minister of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Enterprise.

(b) The Government of the Republic of Moldova integrated all the recommendations emerging from the UNECE study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the country, as part of its action plan for implementing the Agreement on Trade Facilitation. The government adopted a resolution to that effect in late 2017 (Government Decision No. 1065 of 12 December 2017).

(c) The Government of the Republic of Moldova is also revising its Customs Code in line with the recommendations emerging from the above-mentioned study, and the secretariat assisted the Government in conducting the revision.

(d) Kazakhstan provided a written report on progress made in implementing the recommendations emerging from the ECE study during the third annual session of the ECE Steering Committee on Trade capacity and standards (ECE/CTCS/2017/5).

(e) Belarus provided a written report on progress made in implementing the recommendations emerging from the ECE study during the third session of the SCTCS (ECE/CTCS/2017/4).

(f) Kyrgyzstan presented a written report on progress made in implementing the recommendations emerging from the ECE study during the third session of the SCTCS (ECE/CTCS/2017/6).

23. The reports submitted by the Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan list actions in the aforementioned 4 areas. The ECE also assisted the Governments in implementing their actions, including through capacity-building projects that were designed in cooperation with international development partners.

Lessons learned

24. Engaging public-private sector stakeholders in ECE Studies is critical for ensuring policy responsiveness and national ownership. Equally important is the adaptation of the study methodology to the specific development context of the reviewed country. To ensure policy coherence across the four areas addressed in the studies, the secretariat relies on in-house experience in drafting the studies and developing the recommendations, using, as background information, technical reports by consultants and the results of the enterprises surveys.

25. Coordination with donors and international organizations is pursued during the early stages of the research process to avoid duplication. To facilitate implementation, action-oriented solutions are explored, in terms of their feasibility and impact, during the preparation of the studies and are integrated into the recommendations. Moreover, the recommendations are integrated, in their totality, into the national United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) of the respective countries.